

### ***A composites school still enchants India's children even ten years later***



Ten years ago, in 2010, under the lead of Dr. Michael Effing, at the time President of the division Composite Resins at DSM, together with the partner company Kemrock (editors note: now shut down) decided to install a school in Kusgaon, India, of which the building was entirely made from composite material. The parts were made via the pultrusion process from KEMROCK/ TopGlass using the Composites Resins from DSM (now AOC Aliancys).

The school complex consists of 3 buildings, including separate bathrooms for girls and boys with a total surface of 400m<sup>2</sup>. Approximately 140 children from the close or far surroundings go to their daily school lessons held and supported by 8 local teachers. One of the challenges had been for example to build the composite panel building based on Advanced Composite Systems using local unskilled labor. This has successfully been achieved, and shows no sign of wear till date.

"In preparation of the so-called „Shakti project“, we realised during our conversations with many people, that the condition of most village schools in India was deplorable. We also realised that it took too long to build a new school building. The Shakti Project was designed to overcome this problem. We made, delivered and erected a school building, that we donated, in less than 8 weeks. It is a matter of pride that the building still stands, in good condition even today and hopefully for very long time in the future", explains the former President of DSM India, Rajiv Chopra.

All personal strength were bundled in this seven year's project during which the school was entirely run by DSM - from the feeding of the kids with DSM nutritional material like rice or other, over the clothing to the procurement of free-of-charge-laptops (initiative one –laptop per child“ for the kids which had been collected with the help of Dr. Effing's daughter Chiara at the International School in Schaffhausen, Switzerland.

„I am very proud to have brought so much happiness to the school kids of Kusgaon, which actually means „Happy Village“. It was one of the most fulfilling projects I have ever executed

Initially, we just wanted to build the composite school, but ended up in doing and bringing much more. The initial “scope creep” was frowned upon by the Finance department, but since it was very well received by all team members, it found much more support in manpower and team colleagues went there to actively help building the school up. DSM loved this project a lot and in fact I was honored to build two additional schools in Rural India the following year. Many children’s lives were changed during the execution of this project and since then and it was a huge source of joy for all colleagues who have worked on this fulfilling project with us.“ explains Sean DaSilva, the former Shakti-DSM-project manager, now working at Henkel US.

The DSM support of the project ran out in 2017 and since then, resources are missing and the school of course needs additional funds to assure their running and thus the education off the poorest of the poor to support them get access to better living conditions.

Dr. Effing stepped in again, visiting the school together with his former colleagues Sachin Jain and Rajiv Chopra, and decided to sponsor the running of the school with a yearly donation of his company. „It was a deeply fulfilling and moving experience to visit this place 10 years later and to see that everything was still in place – and on top of everything, it is a very clean, calm, inspiring and nice place. The kids are so happy to go there that they even arrive hours before the lessons start, just because they enjoy the surroundings. Our initial work bears fruits – some upgrades have been made on the material and in order to maintain the level of the equipment, I will be happy to support the school with a yearly company donation which all those of you who are willing to support here, can also do (Details at the end of the article).“

Today, Dr. Effing finds local support in Mr. Walter Dloemen, who polymer industry expert and consultant: „Class-room structures in such good use are another proof of composites outperforming at any level, bringing comfort and smiles in the young students class-room environment in rural India. They are climatically robust, have a very small building time and cost and ease of maintenance are given. Further discussions on other projects with composites for the construction on salt-pan location in housing development for the upper middle-class market and the deserted shores of Mumbai City are ongoing and will bring construction to another level.“

Mr. Sashin Jain, located in Pune, India, accompanied the building of the school at his time at DSM and is also happy to continue supporting the maintenance of the Shakti School today. „I am very proud that the Shakti school is still running and continues to enable India’s children for a better education and start in life. I will be the point of contact for submitting the donations and make sure that everything is and comes in place“.

If you or your company wish to support the children in India, please find the bank details here:

AMAC GmbH  
DE 87390601801225072015  
GENODE1AAC  
„Donation Indian composites school“

